Supply of foodgrains to West Bengal

*145. SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1289 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 6th March, 1987 and state the reasons for which the supply of foodgrains to West Bengal under the NREP had come down steadily during the year 1984-85 and 1986-87?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): It is not correct to say that supplies of foodgrains to West Bengal under National Rural Employment Programme have come down steadily. As per information available, the quantities supplied during 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87 were approximately 9,400 tonnes 28,800 tonnes and 42,200 tonnes respectively.

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE: Sir, I am sorry to say that the answer of the hon. Minister is not at all correct. This is the reply he has given to my unstarred Question No. 1289 dated 6th March. The table shows that there has been a steady decline of food supply even during the year 1986-87. The figures given are in terms of per thousand metric tonnes. For the year 1985-86 there is no figure for rice and wheat has been mentioned as 28.8. For 1986-87 the figure given for rice is 0.1 and for wheat 21.4. Even in the last assignment it declined. This decline in supply of foodgrains in West Bengal is in spite of the fact that the performance of West Bengal in respect of NREP is best, even according to the Economic Survey. Last year it was about 144 and in the present year 1986-87 already it is close to 100 per cent.

I beg to mention that in 1984-85 barely 70 lakh tonnes of foodgrains, not even ner cent of the total available huge stock pile of 3 crore tonnes of foodgrains lying with FCI was given for NREP.

While monetary allocation proposed for NREP in the Seventh Plan is even less than that of Sixth Plan, the proposed allocation of foodgrain over the five year period 1985-90 is only 1 million tonnes more than normal requirements. The proposed allocation for IRDP is also less than what it was in the Sixth Plan. For NREP you have increased the wage rate from Rs. 6 to Rs. 12 but did not increase the allocation for funds.

With this stringent allocation and short supply of foodgrains I beg to ask of the hon. Minister: What is the experience of the Government about the anti-poverty programme in rural areas? What is the quality of programme in different States, that is, which are the States reaching their targets and which States are lagging behind?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have to put a separate question on this.

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE: Secondly, will the Government see that with the given huge stock of foodgrains at least five million tonnes are given each year to NREP....

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have exhausted the time for second supplementary also. Yes, Mr. Minister.

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Sir, most of the supplementaries which the hon. lady Member has put forward belong to the Rural Development Ministry. I would like to answer the supplementary which is connected to Food and Supplies Ministry.

The hon. lady Member has said that so far as the supply of wheat for NREP is concerned, it has declined in the previous few years. I would like to mention for her information that in 1982-83 it was 18,200 tonnes, in 1983-84 it was 17,700 tonnes in 1984-85 it was 9,400 tonnes. In 1985-86 it was 28,800 tonnes and in 1986-87 it was 42,200 tonnes. She has referred to her earlier question, Sir, at that time we gave the figures upto 1st January, 1987 only, as asked for by her but by the end of year i.e., on 31st March, there has been further lifting and now it is no more 000 tonnes; it is 42,000 tonnes.

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE: In the previous Food for Work Programme, about 2 million tonnes of food were distributed each year to create millions of mandays. Anyway, it was stopped. Even the NREP, RLEGP, IRDP and anti-poverty programme can easily constitute an alternative strategy of rural development if the stockpile of foodgrains available with the public agencies are allocated and properly used for these anti-poverty programmes. Will this Government give the most [illegible] thought to this?

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Sir, as I have already mentioned, this question which the hon. Member is referring to belongs to Agricultural Ministry, particularly Rural Development Department. As far as, we are concerned, the Rural Development Department asks for food and we supply the food to that Department. It is their business to further distribute through NREP.

श्री लक्ष्मी नारायण : सर, क्या माननीय मंत्री जी यह बतायेंगे कि जहां तक भारत सरकार से स्टेट गवर्नमेंट तक की सप्लाई का तालुक है, वह मोर देन नार्मल है और फर्दर डिस्ट्रिब्यूटन में इसलिये डिटिरियोरेशन है कि वहां एक पर्टिकुलर पार्टी एक पर्टिकुलर ग्रुप को एम्पलाई कराना चाहती है और उस परपज के लिये वहां दो मर्डर भी हो चुके हैं और वहां दो डिपो बन्द किये, जिससे सप्लाई डिटिरियोरेटेड है। क्या इस बारे में मंत्री जी बतायेंगे ? ...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, he is abusing his right.

SHRI LAXMI NARAIN: I am not abusing my right. I am stating the fact. Two murders have taken place because a particular party wants a particular group to be employed. For that reason two depots in West Bengal have been closed. They are not at all functioning.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question not relevant. Next question.

Restructuring of SAIL

*146. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:†
SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority of India Limited is being restructured; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: Sir, I have one thousand press cuttings and some of the national dailies have carried stories on April 6 and 7 saying that SAIL is being restructured. However, since the time is short, I am not going to argue about it. Perhaps the answer is technical. However, I would like to know whether SAIL is implementing any plan under which there will be fewer levels and greater vertical interaction through a flatter organisation. I also want to know whether it is correct that the approval system and promotion policy have been revised to avoid role clarity and performance orientation, whether the recruitment system has also been revised and whether the level of overtime has been reduced.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, the question put was: is the Steel Authority of India Limited being restructured, and we normally understood whether the holding company concept is being changed and modified and so on. Yes, we have seen the newspaper reports. Actually there is a misunderstanding about the word "restructured" and they also have put the heading as "restructured". Therefore, our answer to the question is, "No". I accept that reorganisation of the hierarchy etc. is

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Kapil Verma.